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# **Nepala Bhasa Roman Transliteration (NBRT)**

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**Rukshana Kapali**

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#RukuYuSafoo

# Preface

Late in 1141, I was working on a book to be named *Nepal, Nepali and Nepala Bhasa*. The book was exploring on the politics and linguistics of the term Nepal. In the process, I had to juggle between using three scripts: Nepala Lipi, Devanagari and Roman, and three languages Sanskrit, Nepala Bhasa and Khas. Since the book was being written in English, using Roman alphabets to represent sounds of these three languages was challenging.

There are various practices of romanization for the Devanagari script. One of the mainly used romanization is International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST). Both Devanagari and Nepala Lipi are used to write Sanskrit and Nepala Bhasa. Sanskrit is written in Nepala Lipi among the Nepa-mi (Newa) population, while in Devanagari script among the Khas population. While the native script of Nepala Bhasa is Nepala Lipi and eleven others, the use of Devanagari script emerged as a byproduct of Shah, Rana and Panchayat regimes ban on Nepala Bhasa, and attempt of revival of the language through use of predominant script.

However, IAST is based on Sanskrit and therefore cannot represent Nepala Bhasa phonology or can mislead in readers to comprehend the writing with Sanskrit fixation. Therefore, I came up with certain modifications in IAST to introduce *Nepala Bhasa Roman Transliteration (NBRT)*.

While the book *Nepal, Nepali and Nepala Bhasa* is work on progress, and would take a while to be published, I thought to compile the NBRT section to form this book.

This book presents a set of phonetic romanization for Nepala Bhasa, which may be different from common practices of romanization.



# Nepala Bhasa Roman Transliteration (NBRT)

I propose Nepala Bhasa Roman Transliteration (NBRT) in two forms, one that uses special characteristics and the other that doesn't. This is because I try to align with commonly used form of transliteration (IAST), as well as take into account that diacritic markers may not be easily available in all devices.

## Vowels

Nepala Lipi	Devanagari	NBRT (with diacritics)	NBRT (without diacritics)
अ	अ	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
आ	आ	<i>ā</i>	<i>aa</i>
इ	इ	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>
उ	उ	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>
ए	ए	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>
अः	अः	<i>a:</i>	<i>a:</i>
आः	आः	<i>ā:</i>	<i>aa:</i>
इः	इः	<i>i:</i>	<i>i:</i>
उः	उः	<i>u:</i>	<i>u:</i>
अय्	अय्	<i>e:</i>	<i>e:</i>
एय्	एय्	<i>ee:</i>	<i>ee:</i>
अं	अं	<i>am̥</i>	<i>a~</i>
आं	आं	<i>ām̥</i>	<i>aa~</i>
इं	इं	<i>im̥</i>	<i>i~</i>
उं	उं	<i>um̥</i>	<i>u~</i>

ঁ	ঁ	<i>em̥</i>	<i>e~</i>
ং	ং	<i>am̥</i>	<i>a~:</i>
া	া	<i>ām̥</i>	<i>aa~:</i>
ঁ	ঁ	<i>im̥</i>	<i>i~:</i>
ঁ	ঁ	<i>um̥</i>	<i>u~:</i>
ঁয়	ঁয়	<i>em̥</i>	<i>e~:</i>
ঁয়	ঁয়	<i>eem̥</i>	<i>ee~:</i>

## Diphthongs

Nepala Lipi	Devanagari	NBRT (with diacritics)	NBRT (without diacritics)
ঁ	ঁ	<i>ai</i>	<i>ai</i>
ঁো	ঁো	<i>au</i>	<i>au</i>
ঁাঁ	ঁাঁ	<i>āi</i>	<i>aai</i>
ঁাঁ	ঁাঁ	<i>āu</i>	<i>aau</i>
ঁঁ	ঁঁ	<i>iu</i>	<i>iu</i>
ঁঁ	ঁঁ	<i>ui</i>	<i>ui</i>
ঁয়	ঁয়	<i>āe</i>	<i>aae</i>

## Consonants

Nepala Lipi	Devanagari	NBRT (with diacritics)	NBRT (without diacritics)
ক	ক	<i>ka</i>	<i>ka</i>
খ	খ	<i>kha</i>	<i>kha</i>
গ	গ	<i>ga</i>	<i>ga</i>

घ	घ	gha	gha
ঠ	ঠ	na	nga
ঢ	ঢ	nha	ngha
চ	চ	ca	ca
ছ	ছ	cha	cha
জ	জ	ja	ja
ঃ	ঃ	jha	jha
ঃ	ঃ	ña	n~a
ঙ	ঙ	ñha	n~ha
ঠ	ঠ	ta	ta
থ	থ	tha	tha
ঢ	ঢ	da	da
ধ	ধ	dha	dha
ন	ন	na	na
ঢ	ঢ	nha	nha
ঃ	ঃ	pa	pa
ঢ	ঢ	pha	pha
ঁ	ঁ	ba	ba
ঁ	ঁ	bha	bha
ঃ	ঃ	ma	ma
ঢ	ঢ	mha	mha
ঃ	ঃ	ya	ya
ঢ	ঢ	hya	hya
ঁ	ঁ	ra	ra
ঢ	ঢ	hra	hra

ल	ल	la	la
ळ	ळ	lha	lha
व	व	wa	wa
ळ	ळ	hwa	hwa
स	स	sa	sa
ह	ह	ha	ha

IAST was primarily devised for Sanskrit language, while the alphabet ascribed may be same, the phonology of Nepala Bhasa is different from that of Sanskrit. Here is where things are different from IAST.

### ***Liphuti or Bisarga***

IAST uses *h* to denote *liphuti* (ঠ) or *bisarga* (ঠঠ) marker. NBRT uses ‘ঠ’.

In Sanskrit *bisarga* represents *h* sound, while in Nepala Bhasa *liphuti* denotes a long sound.

In Sanskrit, অঠ অঃ means অহঠ অহঃ, while in Nepala Bhasa অঠ অঃ is the long sound of অঠ অ, and আঠ আঃ is the long sound of আঠ আ.

### ***Sinhaphuti or Sirbindu***

IAST uses *m̄* to denote *sinhaphuti* (ঁ) or *sirbindu* (ঁঁ) marker. NBRT uses ‘ঁঁ’.

In Sanskrit, *sirbindu* represents a homorganic nasal sound, called *pañcama varṇa* (পঞ্চম বর্ণ, পঞ্চম বর্ণ). In Nepala Bhasa, *sinhaphuti* denotes a long nasal sound. NBRT adds ‘ঁ’ to the *milāphuti* (ঁ) or *chandrabindu* (ঁঁ) symbol, as *milāphuti* represents short nasal sound.

For example: In Sanskrit, *amga* (अंग) means *anga* (अङ्ग), *pamca* (पंच) means *pañca* (पञ्च), *amḍā* (अंडा) means *andā* (अण्डा), *amta* (अंत) means *anta* (अन्त), *dambha* (दंभ) means *dambha* (दम्भ).

In Nepala Bhasa, अँ अं is the long sound of अँ अॅ. For example: कँ कं is pronounced as the long sound of कँ कॅ.

## Va to Wa

NBRT does not use *va* to represent व व as in IAST since it is commonly read as ए भ.

## Some aspirated consonants

The alphabets हा हा हा हा हा हा are written in Nepala Lipi, with the *ha* alphabet on the top, which means *ha* is represented first, since an alphabet in Nepala Lipi is written top to bottom.

In Nepala Lipi, wherever the *ha* sound is combined with other sounds, the *ha* is always written on the top (first). For instance, what could be distinguished in writing as घ and ह्य in Devanagari, is हा in Nepala Lipi. It is never written as घा in Nepala Lipi.

In Devanagari as well, it can be written as follows हा ह्य ह्य हा हा हा with the *ha* first, however in practice, they are written as घ्य न्ह म्ह ह्य हा ल्ह ह्य. Which means, घ्य न्ह म्ह ल्ह are written with *ha* latter, while ह्य हा ह्य are written with *ha* first. This practice is the basis of NBRT romanization.

While घ्य न्ह म्ह ल्ह (*where ha appears latter*), is also written as हा ह्य ह्य हा (*where ha appears first*), but ह्य हा ह्य (*where ha appears first*) is never written as ए ह्य ह्य (*where ha appears latter*).

## The *ñ*a and *hñ*a sound

The inclusion of *ñ*a (ঃ, জ) and *hñ*a (ঃ, ঝ) to Nepala Bhasa orthography is relatively new. It was proposed by language expert Bishnu Chitrakar. Due to the predominance of Khas language in Nepal, the alphabet *ñ*a (ঃ, জ) is read as *yam* (যঁ, যঁ) when on its own or appears at the end of the word, and as *na* (ন, ন) when it appears in the middle of a word. For instance, in Khas language, *duniñā* (দুনিঃা, দুনিজ্ঞা) is pronounced as *duniyām* (যুনিযঁা, দুনিযঁা), while *kañcana* (কঞ্জন, কঞ্জন) is pronounced as *kancana* (কঞ্জন, কঞ্জন). However, the alphabet *ñ*a represents a palatal nasal sound in Nepala Bhasa. The sound has been a part of recent discussion in Nepala Bhasa orthography and the mainstream is yet to adopt use of *ñ*a and *hñ*a. Not just in written practice are these alphabets written as *na* and *nha* respectively, but also in spoken language it is noted that this distinction between *na* and *ñ*a is dying out.

An example of *ñ*a in Nepala Bhasa are *ñyatā:* (ঃণ্টা:, জ্যতাঃ) which is now commonly written as *nyatā:* (ণ্টা:, ন্যতাঃ), meaning cheeks.

An example of *ñha* in Nepala Bhasa are *ñhyāke* (ঃঞ্জাক, জ্ব্যাকে) which is now commonly written as *nhyāke* (ঞ্জাক, ন্ব্যাকে), meaning to begin.

## The *e* in *e:* and *āe*

IAST uses *ye* to denote যঁ যে and *y* to denote যঁ যঁ. Unlike Sanskrit, they represent the sound *e* (ঁ এ), and appear after the syllabary ending of *a* (ঁ অ) and *ā* (আ আ), in verbs and nouns respectively, and do not hold a phonological value. For instance: - The verb ধাযঁ ধাযঁ is *dhāe*, and the noun ভাযঁ ভাযঁ is *bhāe*. The verb কযঁ কযঁ is *ke:*, and the noun মযঁ মযঁ is *me:*.

\* - Rendered incorrectly due to lack of glyphs in the font.